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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
17 April 1975

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Indochina
(As of 1600 EDST)
No. 15

VIETNAM

1. The government's position around Xuan Loc is deteriorating rapidly and the threat is quickly shifting to Bien Hoa. Government forces are collapsing in and around Xuan Loc -- some have been hit hard while others are fleeing the battlefield.

2. Meanwhile, Communist sapper regiments reportedly are approaching Bien Hoa from the north and northeast. Regional officials believe there are at least eight Communist regiments now close enough to attack the city within hours. The Marine reserve units which were to fill the north and northeastern defenses of the city failed to arrive on April 17 and there are no regular units defending the critical northern approaches.

South of Saigon

3. The government took the initiative in several actions yesterday in Dinh Tuong Province yesterday and there was heavy fighting along Route 4. The Communists, however, have built up a very substantial force estimated at eight regiments in the province and can put government units on the defensive at any time. With such a large force, the Communists may intend to destroy government forces defending Route 4, isolate units deployed south of Dinh Tuong, and then join other North Vietnamese units to the north and move against Saigon from the southwest.

NSA review(s)
completed.

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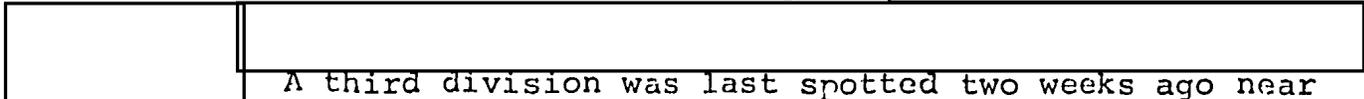


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1st Corps Forces Massing North of Saigon

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4. North Vietnamese 1st Corps forces appear to be assembling near the Cambodian border north of Saigon. 25X1



A third division was last spotted two weeks ago near the Demilitarized Zone and probably is now approaching the region. The fourth division was still in North Vietnam as of mid-April, but it too is moving south.

5. In addition to the infantry divisions, the corps appears to be bringing more armor, artillery, and air defense units south. Photography has spotted SA-2 surface-to-air missiles in Quang Duc Province. SA-2s had previously only been used as far south as the Khe Sanh area of northern South Vietnam. When they become operational, they will make air operations in northern Military Region 3 extremely dangerous.

Even Ragtag 341B Division on the Move

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6.

341B Division is now moving south through the North Vietnam panhandle. The 341B was created only a few weeks ago as a replacement for the 341st Division which moved south and now is fighting east of Saigon. The new unit has not had sufficient time to train, organize and equip its troops and therefore almost certainly is a poor fighting unit. Nonetheless, it could be assigned occupation duties in northern or central South Vietnam and thereby free better combat units to go to the Saigon area.

CAMBODIA

7. The best account of the fate of senior government leaders indicates that former prime minister Long Boret, former information minister Thuong Lim Huong, the former military commander of Phnom Penh General Chhim Chhuon, Lon Non, and Sirik Matak all are still in Phnom Penh, presumably in Communist hands. Boret and his family and Thuong Lim Huong were apparently taken by the Communists



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[REDACTED]

after they were left behind by a helicopter making a dramatic last-minute departure from Phnom Penh's stadium. General Sak Sutsakhan, General Dien Del, and the former minister for security affairs Van Sar were among those who did manage to escape.

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8. [REDACTED] gave orders for all "foreigners, including the Americans, to be kept together at one location." Radio Phnom Penh stopped broadcasting shortly after carrying both government and Communist surrender announcements.

9. The initial Communist announcement over radio Phnom Penh was delivered by an individual who identified himself as "Sekara." This individual may have been a leftist student, one of the many Communist cadre infiltrated into the capital in the past few weeks, or an insurgent unit commander. He is clearly not a ranking figure. [REDACTED] insurgent leaders are not planning to enter the city until the occupation is complete.

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10. The government garrisons at Kompong Speu and Kompong Cham have surrendered. So far there is no word on the intentions of government units at Kampot, Takeo, Prey Veng or Svay Rieng. Government commanders at Kompong Som, Kompong Thom, Kompong Chhnang, and several locations in the northwest, however, are talking of fighting on for as long as possible.